

REMARKS

Summary

Claims 1-47 were pending. Claims 7-10, 14-21, 29, 30, 34-42 and 45 were withdrawn by the Examiner in response to the Applicants' response to an election of species requirement. Claims 1-6, 11, 12, 22-28, 31-33, 43, 44, 46 and 47 were rejected and Claim 13 was objected to. The specification has been amended to include a claim for priority which has previously been asserted and acknowledged. Claims 1, 23 and 47 have been amended. Claims 22 and 46 have been cancelled. No new matter has been introduced.

Objections

Claim 1 objected to on the basis of a minor informality. In view of the amendment to Claim 1, the phrase referred to by the Examiner has been amended such that the objection has been obviated.

Rejections

35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 22 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention. Claims 22 and 46 have been cancelled. Claim 47 has been amended to clearly identify the axes along which the hardened part is disposed. The Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection has been overcome as the axes are distinctly specified.

35 U.S.C. §102 (b)

Claims 1-5, 11, 12, 22, 23, 25-27, 43, 44, 46 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Mashino et al. (US 5,886,759; "Mashino"). Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the subject matter claimed. The Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment is a broadening amendment.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, at least one optical sheet through which light from the light source passes and having a hardened part.

The Examiner states that Mashino discloses “a light source [36]...., and at least one optical sheet [39] through which the light source passes and having region most proximate to the light source with a hardened part [the sandwich on the left in Fig. 5, from the light guide 37 to the reflector sheet 70 and everything in-between].”

The Applicants respond to this rejection with the understanding the Examiner meant “everything in-between” to mean element 75, element 2, and element 79 which includes elements 76, 77 and 79 as shown in Fig. 5.

The Applicants respectfully submit that Mashino teaches that element 75 is an adhesive layer, that element 2 is a gray-colored tape, and that element 79 is a double-sided tape which is typically opaque, having an adhesive layer 78, a base layer 76 and an adhesive layer 77. (Mashimo, col. 6, lines 43-54). Apart from not being what a person skilled in the art would consider to be a means for hardening an optical sheet, the optical sheet 39 is not modified in the arrangement disclosed by Mashino and thus does not have a hardened part. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that Mashino does not teach all of the elements and limitations of amended Claim 1 and the arrangement thereof, and the claim is not anticipated.

The method claim of Claim 23 has been amended similarly to Claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons.

In making a rejection of Claim 11, the Examiner asserts that the hardened part comprises a projecting part [79]. *Arguendo*, the hardened part is the sandwich on the left in Fig. 5, from the light guide 37 to the reflector sheet 70 and everything in-between. The hardened part as defined for the specific purposes of this traverse, comprises the tape 79, the tape 75 and the tape 2. None of these elements projects further in the horizontal plane than any of the others, and does not have the projecting part of the arrangement in Claim 11.

In addition, Claims 2-5, 11, 12, 22, 25-27, 43, 44, 46 and 47 are claims dependent on allowable base claims and are allowable, without more.

Claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 22-25, 31-33, 46 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (e) as being anticipated by Jang et al. (US 6,891,580; "Jang"). The Examiner notes that the applied reference has a common assignee and inventor with the present application (Office Action, page 5, Item 8). As such, the reference is *prima facie* unavailable as a reference under 35 U.S.C. §102 (e) in accordance with 35 U.S.C. §103 (c). As such, an anticipation rejection based on Jang cannot be made, and the rejection is moot.

35 U.S.C. §103 (a)

Claims 6 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Mashino in view of Jeong et al. (US 6,595,651; "Jeong"). Claims 11 and 28 are claims dependent on allowable independent Claims 1 and 23, respectively. Nothing in the disclosure of Jeong has been cited by the Examiner to overcome the deficiencies in the rejections of Claims 1 and 23, and therefore, Claims 6 and 28 are allowable, without more, as claims dependent on an allowable claim.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to Claim 13 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, and indicated that the claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, but respectfully decline to make the suggested amendment, as the remarks presented herein lead to the conclusion that the base claim is allowable.

Rejoinder of Withdrawn Claims

Withdrawn Claims 7-10, 14-21, 29, 30, 34-42 and 45 depend on now allowable claims which should be considered as generic to the withdrawn claims. The Applicants respectfully request that the withdrawn claims now be rejoined to the prosecution and allowed as well.

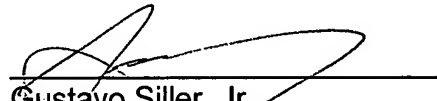
Conclusion

Claims 1, 23 and 47 have been amended; Claims 23 and 46 have been cancelled. Claims 1-6, 11, 12, 13, 22-28, 31-33, 43, 44, 46 and 47 are pending.

For at least the reasons given above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are allowable.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned in the event that a telephone interview would expedite consideration of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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